

October 20

Dear Larry Gottheim:

How have you been? It is by now a beautiful memory that we had a rather nice conversation at Mr. Dearing's office almost four years ago. Just after that meeting, I had dinner with Ken Jacobs at a Chinese restaurant in New York, and we joked with each other, "How can we reject all jobs, which will be coming to us shortly?" The reality turned out exactly as we prophesized... for Ken as well as for me.

There was even very funny episode. The Institute of the Contemporary Arts in London invited me, and I shook the hand of Princess Margaret, and we talked about the computer video art in the luncheon given by the Ministry of Technology of the Labour cabinet. Later, The Rockefeller Foundation recommended me as the "Artist in Residence" of WGBH TV in Boston, one of the largest production centers of the entire public Television System. In the mean time, we organized the "TV as Creative Medium" at Howard Wise Gallery and "Vision and Television" show at Brandeis University, which triggered the Video Revolution, which strives to reclaim the land of America from the monopolized "Idiotracy" of three TV networks. And I felt like a tired old man when the Radical Software called me "George Washington of Underground Video".

Now so much for my report for the last 3- 4 years. In these 3- 4 years I have visited some 20 video production centers in New York, Boston, California and Europe, sometimes as guest or as a consultant or producer... and without hesitation, I will claim that the Community Television Center at Binghamton is the BEST RUN TV center among all of them.

As you see, video is neither film, nor writing, nor art. It is something totally new and Ralph has most adequate sense of balancing many diverse prospects and functions of this emerging media. He knows that video is an excellent medium to create new artistic sensations, which is not possible in any other kind of art. He knows that it will widen the boundary of film and art, and he knows the fruitful interfacing possibility of Film/Video and Film/Art. He is not restricted by today's technology. He has the concrete vision to use TV in huge shaped canvas screen, made by semi-conductor screen, fed by Video cassette. It is not a daydream, but a scientifically proven future which needs only minor technical innovations.

On the other hand, he is an excellent man to trigger and teach the community involvement in TV production, without which no progress of any kind will be made in the coming society. His down to earth character can reach the mind of all spectrum of society from the young psychology major to IBM salesman to woman's lib and to retired businessman. I lived at Ralph's center for two weeks, and I saw it happening every day. I have experienced the unending stream of ALL kind of people who seek his advice and who turned in their video creation with utmost satisfaction. He is an excellent teacher,... a man born to teach.

Video must be as handy as paper and pen... You need not be James Reston or Norman Mailer to write down your experience or your opinion. Video production must also be made so easy and unpretentious. Ralph is one of the few who understands this, and his character exactly fits to this object. He is an irreplaceable man, a big asset, not only

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for Binghaintun, but for all SUNY system.

Nam June Paik

P.S. From next month I will start working at NET, Channel 13, New York as the artist in residence. Shortly I will be able to invite you down to New York to show you various operations there.

Nam June Paik

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